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MONDAY, 30 DECEMBER, 1918.

War Office,  
30th December, 1918.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch from General Sir Edmund Allenby, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force:—

General Headquarters,  
31st October, 1918.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward a despatch describing the operations which, commencing on September 19th, resulted in the destruction of the enemy's army, the liberation of Palestine and Syria, and the occupation of Damascus and Aleppo.

1. The latter months of the period covered by my despatch of September 18th, 1918, had been spent in the reorganisation of my Force. The last Indian battalions to arrive had been incorporated in divisions early in August. Some of these battalions had only been formed a few months, and I should have liked to have given them further opportunities to accustom themselves to the conditions prevailing on this front before calling on them to play a part in arduous operations on a large scale. The rains, however, usually commence at the end of October, rendering the plains of Sharon and

Esdraelon impassable for transport, except along the few existing roads. Consequently, operations could not be postponed beyond the middle of September.

2. At the beginning of September I estimated the strength of the IVth, VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies to be 23,000 rifles, 3,000 sabres and 340 guns. The IVth Army, 6,000 rifles, 2,000 sabres and 74 guns, faced my Forces in the Jordan Valley. The VIIth Army held a front of some 20 miles astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road with 7,000 rifles and 111 guns, while the VIIIth Army front extended from Furkhah to the sea, and was held by 10,000 rifles and 157 guns.

In addition, the garrison of Maan and the posts on the Hejaz railway north of it consisted of some 6,000 rifles and 30 guns.

The enemy's general reserve, only 3,000 rifles in strength, with 30 guns, was distributed between Tiberias, Nazareth and Haifa.

Thus his total strength amounted to some 4,000 sabres, 32,000 rifles and 400 guns—representing a ration strength, south of the line Rayak-Beirut, of 104,000.

3. I had at my disposal two cavalry divisions, two mounted divisions, seven infantry divisions, an Indian infantry brigade, four unallotted battalions, and the French detachment (the equivalent of an infantry brigade, with other arms attached), a total, in the fight-

ing line, of some 12,000 sabres, 57,000 rifles and 540 guns.

I had thus a considerable superiority in numbers over the enemy, especially in mounted troops.

4. I was anxious to gain touch with the Arab Forces east of the Dead Sea, but the experience gained in the raids which I had undertaken against Amman and Es Salt in March and May had proved that the communications of a force in the hills of Moab were liable to interruption as long as the enemy was able to transfer troops from the west to the east bank of the Jordan. This he was in a position to do, as he controlled the crossing at Jisr ed Damieh.

The defeat of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies west of the Jordan would enable me to control this crossing. Moreover, the destruction of these armies, which appeared to be within the bounds of possibility, would leave the IVth Army isolated, if it continued to occupy the country south and west of Amman. I determined, therefore, to strike my blow west of the Jordan.

5. With the exception of a small and scattered reserve, the whole of the Turkish Force west of the Jordan was enclosed in a rectangle 45 miles in length and only 12 miles in depth. The northern edge of this rectangle was a line from Jisr ed Damieh on the Jordan, through Nablus and Tul Keram, to the sea. All the enemy's communications to Damascus ran northwards from the eastern half of this line, converging on El Afule and Beisan, some 25 miles to the north. Thence, with the exception of the roads leading from El Afule along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, his communications ran eastwards up the valley of the Yarmuk to Deraa, the junction of the Palestine and Hejaz Railways.

Thus El Afule, Beisan and Deraa were the vital points on his communications. If they could be seized, the enemy's retreat would be cut off. Deraa was beyond my reach, but not beyond that of mobile detachments of the Arab Army. It was not to be expected that these detachments could hold this railway junction, but it was within their power to dislocate all traffic.

El Afule, in the Plain of Esdraelon, and Beisan, in the Valley of Jezreel, were within reach of my cavalry, provided the infantry could break through the enemy's defensive systems and create a gap for the cavalry to pass through. It was essential that this gap should be made at the commencement of operations, so that the cavalry might reach their destinations, 45 and 60 miles distant, before the enemy could make his escape. Moreover, whichever route the cavalry followed, the hills of Samaria, or their extension towards Mount Carmel, had to be crossed before the plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel could be reached; and it was most important that the enemy should not be given time to man the passes.

6. For this reason I decided to make my main attack in the coastal plain, rather than through the hills north of Jerusalem. In the hills the ground afforded the enemy positions of great natural strength, and taxed the physical energy of the attackers to the utmost. The operations in March, astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road, had proved that an advance of five miles in one day, in face of determined opposition, was the most that could be ex-

pected. A far more rapid and decisive advance than this was necessary. In addition, the route along the coast would enable the cavalry to pass through the hills of Samaria into the plain of Esdraelon at their narrowest point, thus ensuring greater speed and less likelihood of being checked. The supply of a large force of troops in the plain also presented fewer difficulties.

7. The coastal plain at Jiljulieh, the ancient Gilgal, is some 10 miles in width. The railway from Jiljulieh to Tul Keram skirts the foothills, running through a slight depression on the eastern edge of the plain. To the west of this depression the Turks had constructed two defensive systems. The first, 14,000 yards in length and 3,000 in depth, ran along a sandy ridge in a north-westerly direction from Bir Adas to the sea. It consisted of a series of works connected by continuous fire trenches. The second, or Et Tireh system, 3,000 yards in rear, ran from the village of that name to the mouth of the Nahr Falik. On the enemy's extreme right the ground, except for a narrow strip along the coast, is marshy, and could only be crossed in few places. The defence of the second system did not, therefore, require a large force.

The railway itself was protected by numerous works and by the fortified villages of Jiljulieh and Kalkilieh. The ground between our front line at Ras El Ain and these villages was open, and was overlooked from the enemy's works on the foothills round Kefr Kasim.

8. By reducing the strength of the troops in the Jordan Valley to a minimum, and by withdrawing my reserves from the hills north of Jerusalem, I was able to concentrate five divisions and the French detachment, with a total of 383 guns, for the attack on these defences. Thus, on the front of attack I was able to concentrate some 35,000 rifles against 8,000, and 383 guns against 130. In addition, two cavalry and one Australian mounted divisions were available for this front.

9. I entrusted the attack on the enemy's defences in the coastal plain to Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Bulfin, K.C.B., C.V.O., commanding the XXIst Corps. In addition to the 3rd (Lahore), 7th (Meerut), 54th and 75th Divisions, which already formed part of the XXIst Corps, I placed at his disposal the 60th Division, the French detachment, the 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade, two brigades of mountain artillery, and eighteen batteries of heavy and siege artillery.

I ordered him to break through the enemy's defences between the railway and the sea, to open a way for the cavalry, and at the same time to seize the foothills south-east of Jiljulieh. The XXIst Corps was then to swing to the right, on the line Hableh-Tul Keram, and advance in a north-easterly direction through the hills, converging on Samaria and Attara, so as to drive the enemy up the Messudie-Jenin road into the arms of the cavalry at El Afule.

I ordered Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., commanding the Desert Mounted Corps, less the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, to advance along the coast, directly the infantry had broken through and had secured the crossings over the Nahr Falik. On reaching the line Jelameh-Hudeira he was to turn north-east, cross the hills of Samaria, and enter the plain of Esdraelon at El Lejjun and Abu Shusheh. Riding along the plain, the Desert Mounted

Corps was to seize El Afule, sending a detachment to Nazareth, the site of the Yilderim General Headquarters. Sufficient troops were to be left at El Afule to intercept the Turkish retreat there. The remainder of the Corps was to ride down the Valley of Jezreel and seize Beisan.

I ordered Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Chetwode, Bart., K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the XXth Corps, to advance his line, east of the Bireh-Nablus road, on the night preceding the main attack, so as to place the 53rd Division on his right flank, which was somewhat drawn back, in a more favourable position to advance and block the exits to the lower valley of the Jordan.

I ordered him to be prepared to carry out a further advance, with both the 53rd and 10th Divisions, on the evening of the day on which the attack in the coastal plain took place, or later, as circumstances demanded.

10. The main difficulties lay in concealing the withdrawal of two cavalry divisions from the Jordan Valley, and in concentrating, secretly, a large force in the coastal plain.

To prevent the decrease in strength in the Jordan Valley being discovered by the enemy, I ordered Major-General Sir Edward Chaytor, K.C.M.G., C.B., A.D.C., to carry out, with the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, the 20th Indian (Imperial Service) Infantry Brigade, the 38th and 39th Battalions Royal Fusiliers, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions British West Indies Regiment, a series of demonstrations with the object of inducing the enemy to believe that an attack east of the Jordan was intended, either in the direction of Madeba or Amman. The enemy was thought to be anticipating an attack in these directions, and every possible step was taken to strengthen his suspicions.

At this time a mobile column of the Arab Army, accompanied by British armoured cars and a French mountain battery, was assembling at Kasr el Azrak, fifty miles east of Amman. The real objective of this column was the railway north, south and west of Deraa. There was always the possibility, however, that this concentration might be observed. Should this occur it was hoped that the demonstrations by Chaytor's force would strengthen the enemy's belief that a concerted attack on Amman was intended.

The concentration in the coastal plain was carried out by night, and every precaution was taken to prevent any increased movement becoming apparent to the Turks. Full use of the many groves round Ramleh, Ludd and Jaffa was made to conceal troops during the day. The chief factor in the secrecy maintained must be attributed, however, to the supremacy in the air which had been obtained by the Royal Air Force. The process of wearing down the enemy's aircraft had been going on all through the summer. During one week in June 100 hostile aeroplanes had crossed our lines. During the last week in August this number had decreased to eighteen. In the next few days a number were shot down, with the result that only four ventured to cross our lines during the period of concentration.

11. That the enemy expected an offensive on my part about this date is probable. That he remained in ignorance of my intention to attack in the coastal plain with overwhelming numbers is certain. On the morning of September 19th, when the attack in the coastal

plain was launched his dispositions were normal.

12. Whilst the concentration in the coastal plain was nearing completion the enemy's railway communications at Deraa were attacked by the Royal Air Force, and by the Mobile Column of the Arab Army, which, after concentrating at Kasr el Azrak, 50 miles east of Amman, had moved into the Hauran.

The railway line and station buildings at Deraa were damaged by the Royal Air Force on September 16th and 17th. On September 16th the Arab column, which had been joined by the Shalaan sections of the Roalla, Anazeh, and by a number of Druses, attacked the Hejaz Railway, fifteen miles south of Deraa, destroying a bridge and a section of the railway. On the following day the line was attacked both north and west of Deraa, extensive demolitions being carried out. As the result of these demolitions all through traffic to Palestine ceased, and a considerable quantity of transport, which had been intended for the Hejaz, was diverted to bridge the break in the railway.

13. The concentration in the coastal plain had been completed by the morning of September 18th. During the night of September 18th/19th, the XXth Corps swung forward its right on the east of the Bireh-Nablus Road. The 53rd Division descended into the basin at the head of the Wadi Samieh, captured Kh. Jibeit, El Mugheir, and the ridge on the far side of the basin, and all its objectives with the exception of one hill Kh. Abu Malul. Considerable opposition was encountered, and hand-to-hand fighting took place in which over 400 prisoners were taken.

In the early hours of September 19th El Afule and the headquarters of the Turkish VIIth and VIIIth Armies at Nablus and Tulkeram were bombed by the Royal Air Force with a view to disorganising their signal communications.

At 04.30 the artillery in the coastal plain opened an intense bombardment, lasting fifteen minutes, under cover of which the infantry left their positions of deployment. Two torpedo boat destroyers assisted, bringing fire on the coastal road to the north.

14. The operations which followed fall into five phases.

The first phase was of short duration. In 36 hours, between 04.30 on September 19th and 17.00 on September 20th, the greater part of the VIIth Turkish Army had been overwhelmed, and the troops of the VIIth Army were in full retreat through the hills of Samaria, whose exits were already in the hands of my cavalry.

In the second phase the fruits of this success were reaped. The infantry, pressing relentlessly on the heels of the retreating enemy, drove him into the arms of my cavalry, with the result that practically the whole of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies were captured, with their guns and transport.

This phase also witnessed the capture of Haifa and Acre, and the occupation of Tiberias, and of the country to the south and west of the Sea of Galilee.

As the result of the rout of the VIIth and VIIIth Armies the IVth Turkish Army, east of the Jordan, retreated, and Maan was evacuated.

The third phase commenced with the pursuit of this army by Chaytor's Force, and

closed with the capture of Amman, and the interception of the retreat of the garrison of Maan, which surrendered.

The fourth phase witnessed the advance by the Desert Mounted Corps to Damascus, the capture of the remnants of the IVth Turkish Army, and the advance by the XXIst Corps along the coast from Haifa to Beirut.

In the fifth phase my troops reached Homs and Tripoli without opposition. My cavalry then advanced on Aleppo, and occupied that city on October 26th.

15. The attack in the Coastal Plain on the morning of September 19th was attended with complete success. On the right, in the foothills, the French Tirailleurs and the Armenians of the Légion d'Orient advanced with great dash, and, in spite of the difficulties of the ground, and the strength of the enemy's defences, had captured the Kh. Deir El Kussis ridge at an early hour. On their left the 54th Division stormed Kefr Kasim village, and wood, and the foothills overlooking the railway from Ras El Ain to Jiljulieh. North of Kefr Kasim the advance was checked for a time at Sivri Tepe, but the enemy's resistance was quickly overcome, and the remaining hills, south of the Wadi Kanah, captured.

In the Coastal Plain the 3rd (Lahore) Division attacked the enemy's first system between Bir Adas and the Hadrah road. On its left the 75th Division attacked the Tabsor defences, the 7th (Meerut) Division the works west of Tabsor, while the 60th Division attacked along the coast. The enemy replied energetically to our bombardment, but in most cases his barrage fell behind the attacking infantry. The enemy was overwhelmed. After over-running the first system, the three divisions on the left pressed on, without pausing, to the Et Tireh position. On the left the 60th Division reached the Nahr Falik, and moved on Tul Keram, leaving the route along the coast clear for the Desert Mounted Corps. The 7th (Meerut) Division, after passing through the second system, swung to the right, and headed for Et Taiyibeh, leaving Et Tireh, where the 75th Division was still fighting, on its right.

By 11.0 the 75th Division had captured Et Tireh, a strongly fortified village standing on a sandy ridge, where the enemy offered a determined resistance. On the right the 3rd (Lahore) Division turned to the east, and attacked Jiljulieh, Railway Redoubt, Kefr Saba and Kalkilieh, all of which were defended with stubbornness by the enemy. His resistance was, however, broken; and the 3rd (Lahore) Division pressed on eastwards into the foothills near Hableh, joining hands with the 54th Division north of the Wadi Kanah.

Disorganised bodies of the enemy were now streaming across the plain towards Tul Keram, pursued by the 60th Division and the 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade. This brigade, which had been attached to the XXIst Corps, consisted of two Australian Light Horse Regiments, with a composite regiment of Chasseurs d'Afrique and Spahis attached. Great confusion reigned at Tul Keram. Bodies of troops, guns, motor lorries and transport of every description were endeavouring to escape along the road leading to Messudie and Nablus. This road, which follows the railway up a narrow valley, was already crowded with troops and transport. The confusion was added to by the persistent attacks of the Royal

Air Force, and Australian Flying Corps, from which there was no escape. Great havoc was caused, and in several places the road was blocked by overturned lorries and vehicles. Later in the evening an Australian regiment, having made a detour, succeeded in reaching a hill four miles east of Tul Keram, overlooking the road. As a result, a large amount of transport and many guns fell into our hands.

In the meantime the 7th (Meerut) Division and 3rd (Lahore) Division had entered the hills, and, in conjunction with the 54th Division, had pressed eastwards. By dusk the line Bidieh-Kh. Kefr Thilth-Jiyus-Felamieh-Taiyibeh had been reached. The 75th Division remained in the vicinity of Et Tireh in corps reserve.

16. As soon as the success of the initial attack by the XXIst Corps, on the morning of September 19th, had become apparent, I ordered the XXth Corps to advance that night on Nablus, and the high ground north-east of that town, in order to close the roads leading to the lower valley of the Jordan, and to drive the enemy from the triangle formed by the Kh. Fusail-Nablus road, our original front line, and the El Funduk-Nablus track, by which the 3rd (Lahore) Division was advancing.

The two divisions of the XXth Corps had been concentrated beforehand, in readiness to carry out this operation; the 53rd Division to the east of the Bireh-Nablus road, the 10th Division on the extreme left of the Corps Area, in the vicinity of Berukin and Kefr Ain. The enemy had long anticipated an attack astride the Bireh-Nablus road, and had constructed defences of great strength on successive ridges. For this reason the 10th Division was ordered to attack in a north-easterly direction astride the Furkhah-Selfit and Berukin-Kefr Haris ridges, thus avoiding a direct attack. Even so, the task of the XXth Corps was a difficult one. The enemy in this portion of the field was not disorganised, and was able to oppose a stout resistance to the advance. The country is broken and rugged, demanding great physical exertion on the part of the troops, and preventing the artillery keeping pace with the infantry.

Nevertheless, good progress was made on the night of September 19th and during the following day. The 53rd Division captured Kh. Abu Malul, and advanced their line in the centre. On their right Khan Jibeit was heavily counter-attacked on the morning of September 20th. The Turks succeeded in regaining the hill, but were driven off again after a sharp fight. This incident, and the necessity of making a road to enable the guns to be brought forward, caused delay.

The 10th Division advanced in two columns, and by midday on September 20th the right column, after a hard fight at Furkhah, had reached Selfit and was approaching Iskaka, which was strongly held by the enemy. The left column reached Kefr Haris, which was only captured after heavy fighting. The 10th Division had already driven the enemy back seven miles. The artillery, however, had been unable to keep up with the infantry, and little progress was made during the afternoon.

On the left of the 10th Division the XXIst Corps had continued its advance in three columns. On the right the 3rd Division advanced up the Wadi Azzun. In the centre the Meerut Division moved on Kefr Sur and Beit Lid. The 60th Division and the 5th Austra-

ian Light Horse Brigade advanced along the Tul Keram-Nablus road on Messudie Station. By evening the line Baka-Beit Lid-Messudie Station-Attara had been reached.

The 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions encountered a determined and well-organised resistance, which stiffened as the Meerut Division approached Beit Lid. The enemy showed no signs of demoralisation, and the country was very rugged and difficult.

Considerable confusion existed, however, behind the enemy's rearguards. All day his transport had been withdrawing. The Messudie-Jenin road was crowded. Its defiles had been bombed continuously by the Royal Air Force, as had long columns of troops and transport moving on Nablus in order to reach the Beisan road. It is probable that the enemy did not yet realise that my cavalry was already in Afule and Beisan, and had blocked his main lines of retreat.

17. Early on the morning of September 19th, before the infantry had advanced to the attack, the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions moved out of the groves round Saron, and formed up in rear of the 7th (Meerut) and 60th Divisions. The Australian Mounted Division, less the 5th Light Horse Brigade, was on its way from Ludd.

Thanks to the rapidity with which the infantry broke through both Turkish systems of defence, the cavalry obtained a good start. By noon the leading troops of the Desert Mounted Corps had reached Jelameh, Tell ed Drurh and Hudeira, eighteen miles north of the original front line. After a brief rest the advance was continued. The 5th Cavalry Division moved north to Ez Zerghaniyeh. It then turned north-east, and, riding through the hills of Samaria past Jarak, descended into the Plain of Esdraelon at Abu Shusheh. The 13th Cavalry Brigade was then directed on Nazareth, the 14th on El Afule.

The 4th Cavalry Division turned north-east at Kh. es Sumrah, and followed the valley of the Wadi Arah into the hills. The valley gradually narrows as the pass at Musmus is reached.

The enemy had sent a battalion from El Afule to hold this pass, but only its advanced guard arrived in time. Overcoming its resistance, the cavalry encountered the remainder of the battalion at El Lejjun. The 2nd Lancers charged, killed forty-six with the lance, and captured the remainder, some 470 in number.

The 4th Cavalry Division then marched to El Afule, which it reached at 08.00, half an hour after its capture by the 14th Cavalry Brigade.

In the meantime the 13th Cavalry Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division, riding across the Plain of Esdraelon, had reached Nazareth, the site of the Yilderim General Headquarters, at 05.30. Fighting took place in the streets, some 2,000 prisoners being captured. Liman von Sanders had already made good his escape, but his papers and some of his staff were taken. This brigade then marched to El Afule; arriving there as the 4th Cavalry Division rode down the Plain of Jezreel to Beisan, which it reached at 16.30, having covered some eighty miles in thirty-four hours. The 4th Cavalry Division detached a regiment to seize the railway bridge over the Jordan at Jisr Mejamie.

The Australian Mounted Division, which had followed the 4th Cavalry Division into the Plain of Esdraelon, was directed on Jenin, where the road from Messudie to El Afule leaves the hills. Jenin was reached at 17.30, and was captured after a sharp fight, a large number of prisoners being taken.

Thus, within 36 hours of the commencement of the battle, all the main outlets of escape remaining to the Turkish VIIth and VIIIth Armies had been closed. They could only avoid capture by using the tracks which run south-east from the vicinity of Nablus to the crossings over the Jordan at Jisr ed Damieh. These were being rapidly denied to them.

The first phase of the operations was over.

18. The enemy's resistance had been broken on September 20th. On September 21st the Turkish rearguards were driven in early in the morning. All organised resistance ceased. The 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade, with the French Cavalry leading, entered Nablus from the west; the 10th Division from the south.

By the evening, the XXth Corps had reached the line Neby Belan, on the high ground north-east of Nablus, and Mount Ebal; the XXIth Corps the line Samaria, Attara, Belah.

Since the early hours of the morning great confusion had reigned in the Turkish rear. Camps and hospitals were being hurriedly evacuated; some were in flames. The roads leading north-east and east from Nablus to Beisan and the Jordan Valley were congested with transport and troops. Small parties of troops were moving east along the numerous wadis. The disorganisation which already existed was increased by the repeated attacks of the Royal Air Force; in particular, on the closely packed column of transport moving north from Balata to Kh. Ferweh, where a road branches off, along the Wadi Farah, to Jisr ed Damieh. Some of the transport continued along the road to Beisan, where it fell into the hands of the 4th Cavalry Division. The greater part made for the Jordan along the Wadi Farah. Nine miles from Kh. Ferweh, at Ain Shibleh, a road branches off to the north to Beisan. A mile beyond this point the Wadi Farah passes through a gorge. The head of the column was heavily bombed at this point. The drivers left their vehicles in panic, wagons were overturned, and in a short time the road was completely blocked. Still attacked by the Royal Air Force, the remainder of the column turned off at Ain Shibleh, and headed for Beisan.

The VIIth Turkish Army was by this time thoroughly disorganised, and was scattered in the area between the Kh. Ferweh-Beisan road and the Jordan. These parties had now to be collected.

At 01.30 on September 22nd the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade and the British West Indies Battalions of Chaytor's Force seized the bridge at Jisr ed Damieh. All hope of escape for the enemy in that direction had vanished.

In the early hours of the morning, parties of Turks, of strengths varying from 50 to 300, began to approach Beisan, preceded by white flags.

At 08.00 a column, with transport and guns, 10 miles long, was reported by the Royal Air Force to be moving north along the Ain

Shibleh-Beisan road, its head being 9 miles south of Beisan. The 4th Cavalry Division was ordered to send detachments towards it, and also to patrol the road, which follows the Jordan on its east bank, to secure any parties which might escape across the Jordan.

At the same time the Worcester Yeomanry of the XXth Corps, supported by infantry, was ordered to advance northwards from Ain Shibleh, and the infantry of the 10th Division along the Tubas-Beisan road, to collect stragglers, and to drive any formed bodies into the hands of the 4th Cavalry Division.

The Royal Air Force had proceeded to attack the Turkish column, which broke up and abandoned its guns and transport. The task of clearing the enemy between the Kh. Ferweh-Beisan road and the Jordan was continued during September 23rd. On this day the XXth Corps Cavalry met with occasional opposition, and its advance was hampered considerably by the large numbers of Turks who surrendered. Great quantities of transport and numerous guns were found abandoned by the roadsides. On one stretch of road, under five miles in length, 87 guns, 55 motor lorries and 842 vehicles were found.

Numerous bodies of Turks surrendered to the 4th Cavalry Division. One column attempted to escape across the Jordan at Makhadet Abu Naj, 5 miles south-east of Beisan, but was intercepted by the 11th Cavalry Brigade. Part of the column had already crossed to the east bank. It was charged by the 36th (Jacob's) Horse, and broken up, few escaping. On the west bank the remainder of the column was charged by the 29th Lancers and Middlesex Yeomanry, who killed many and captured the remainder, together with 25 machine guns.

On September 24th the 11th Cavalry Brigade attacked and dispersed another column in the Wadi El Maleh. The last remnants of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies had been collected. As Armies they had ceased to exist, and but few had escaped.

19. Whilst the 4th Cavalry and the Australian Mounted Divisions were collecting the remnants of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies, I ordered the Desert Mounted Corps to occupy Acre and Haifa. The roads leading to Haifa from Tul Keram are only country tracks, which, in the event of rain, might become impassable for motor lorries at any time. Any force advancing northwards from Haifa along the coast would have to depend on supplies landed at that port. It was necessary, therefore, to occupy the town without delay, in order that the harbour could be swept for mines, and the landing of stores taken in hand. The 13th Cavalry Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division, which had entered Nazareth on September 20th, and had then marched to El Afule, returned to Nazareth the following day.

Part of the garrison of Haifa, which was attempting to reach Tiberias, was intercepted by this Brigade on the morning of September 22nd. At 01.30 this column approached the outposts of the 13th Cavalry Brigade. It was attacked in the moonlight by the 18th Lancers, who killed a large number of Turks and captured over 300.

That afternoon Haifa was reconnoitred by a battery of Armoured Cars. It was still held

by the enemy. The road was barricaded, and the Armoured Cars were shelled from the slopes of Mount Carmel.

On September 23rd the 5th Cavalry Division, less the 13th Cavalry Brigade, marched from El Afule to capture the town. The 13th Cavalry Brigade marched direct from Nazareth on Acre.

The road from El Afule to Haifa skirts the north-eastern edge of the Mount Carmel range. Some two miles before Haifa is reached the road is confined between a spur of Mount Carmel on the left and the marshy banks of the River Kishon and its tributaries on the right. When the 5th Cavalry Division reached this point on September 23rd it was shelled from the slopes of Mount Carmel, and found the road and the river crossings defended by numerous machine guns.

Whilst the Mysore Lancers were clearing the rocky slopes of Mount Carmel the Jodhpur Lancers charged through the defile, and, riding over the enemy's machine guns, galloped into the town, where a number of Turks were speared in the streets. Colonel Thakur Dalpat Singh, M.C., fell gallantly leading this charge.

In this operation 1,350 prisoners and 17 guns were taken.

At Acre the 13th Cavalry Brigade met with little opposition. The small garrison, consisting of 150 men and 2 guns, attempted to escape to the north, but was overtaken and captured.

20. Interest now turned to the fate of the IVth Turkish Army east of the Jordan. Up till September 22nd this Army showed no signs of moving from its positions on the east bank. On the west bank the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade and the 1st and 2nd Battalions British West Indies Regiment had advanced northwards on September 21st, west of the Jericho-Beisan road, and had reached Khurbet Fusail, four miles in advance of our defences at El Musalabeh. The enemy, however, still held the bridgeheads on the west bank, covering the crossings at Umm Es Shert, Red Hill, Ma'fid Jozeleh, and Jisr Ed Damieh. Early in the morning of September 22nd the 38th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, captured the bridgehead at Umm Es Shert. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles placed themselves astride the road which follows the Wadi Farah from Nablus to Jisr Ed Damieh, thus closing the last loophole of escape to the Turkish forces west of the Jordan. The crossing at Jisr Ed Damieh was captured a few hours later. The bridge was intact. 514 prisoners were taken.

Thus the west bank of the Jordan had been cleared. As a result of the defeat of the VIIth and VIIIth Armies, the position of the IVth Army east of the Jordan was no longer tenable, and by the morning of 23rd September this Army was in full retreat on Es Salt and Amman, pursued by the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, and bombed by the Royal Air Force. At 16.30 the New Zealanders captured Es Salt, taking 380 prisoners and three guns. The pursuit was continued on a broad front, in face of stout opposition from the enemy's rearguards. On 25th September Amman was attacked and captured.

The enemy retreated northwards along the Hejaz railway and the Pilgrim route in a dis-



organised state, harassed by the Royal Air Force and the Arabs. He was pursued by the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Divisions, and left over 5,000 prisoners and 28 guns in their hands.

I ordered Chaytor's Force to remain at Amman to intercept the troops of the 2nd Turkish Army Corps, who were retreating from the Hejaz. Maan had been evacuated on 23rd September, and had been occupied by the Arab Army, which then advanced to Jerdun, harassing the rear of the retreating garrison.

On 28th September these troops came into contact with the patrols of Chaytor's Force at Leban Station, 10 miles south of Amman. The Turkish commander, seeing that escape was impossible, surrendered on the following day with 5,000 men.

21. In addition to bringing about the retreat of the IVth Turkish Army, the total defeat of the VIIth and VIIIth Armies had removed any serious obstacle to an advance on Damascus. On 25th September I ordered the Desert Mounted Corps to carry out this operation, occupy the city, and intercept the retreat of the remnants of the IVth Turkish Army.

22. The Desert Mounted Corps was to advance on Damascus in two columns; one column by the south end of the Sea of Galilee, viâ Irbid and Deraa, the other round the north end of the sea, viâ El Kuneitra.

On September 24th, Semakh, at the south end of the Sea of Galilee, was captured by the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade, after fierce hand-to-hand fighting, in which 350 Turks and Germans and a gun were captured. Tiberias was occupied on the following afternoon.

Thus on September 26th the Australian Mounted Division was concentrating round Tiberias, and the 5th Cavalry Division was marching from Haifa and Acre to Nazareth. The 4th Cavalry Division was concentrated round Beisan.

23. The 4th Cavalry Division started on its 120-mile march that afternoon. The Australian and 5th Cavalry Divisions started the following day, the distance they had to traverse being 30 miles less. Both columns met with opposition. The Australian Mounted Division experienced considerable difficulty in crossing the Jordan on September 27th. The bridge at Jisr Benat Yakub had been damaged, and Turkish rearguards commanded the crossings. After some delay, the 5th Australian Brigade succeeded in crossing the river a mile south of the bridge; and, working round the enemy's flank, forced him to retire. Opposition was again met with on the eastern side of the Jordan plateau, at El Kuneitra, and the column was continually fired on by the Circassians who dwell on the plateau. Passing through El Kuneitra, the column entered first a plateau covered by boulders and then undulating pasture land, intersected by the numerous streams which rise in Mount Hermon. Fighting took place at Sasa, but the enemy's rearguards were driven back, and, by 1000 on September 30th, Katana, 12 miles south-west of Damascus, had been reached by the Australian Mounted Division, which was here checked for a time.

At this hour the 14th Cavalry Brigade, on the right of the Australian Mounted Division, was approaching Sahnaya on the old French railway. Further south the 4th Cavalry Division,

with the Arab Army on its right, was approaching Kiswe.

The route followed by the 4th Cavalry Division across the Jordan plateau had proved difficult, and considerable opposition had been encountered at Irbid, and again at Er Remte, where, after driving the enemy northwards towards Mezerib, the Cavalry gained touch with the Arab Army.

After its raids on the enemy's railways round Deraa between September 16th and 18th, the Arab Army had moved into the Hauran. It issued thence to attack the IVth Turkish Army, as the latter passed Mafrak in its retreat northwards, forcing the Turks to abandon guns and transport. Moving rapidly northwards, the Arabs then captured the stations of Ezra and Ghazale, between Damascus and Deraa. On September 27th they entrenched themselves at Sheikh Saad, 17 miles north of Deraa, across the Turkish line of retreat. Sharp fighting took place all day, in which heavy casualties were inflicted on the retreating Turks and Germans and in which numerous prisoners were taken. After breaking up the retreating columns of the IVth Army, the Arabs captured Deraa, and, on September 28th, joined hands with the 4th Cavalry Division near Er Remte.

The Cavalry then advanced northwards through Mezerib and along the old French railway, with the Arabs on its right flank, collecting stragglers, and pressing on the heels of the remnants of the IVth Turkish Army.

In this way a column of Turks some 1,500 strong was driven at noon on September 30th into the arms of the 14th Cavalry Brigade at Sahnaya.

Shortly after midday on September 30th the Australian Mounted Division overcame the enemy's resistance at Katana. By the evening it had closed the exits from Damascus to the north and north-west, while the 5th Cavalry Division had reached the southern outskirts of the town.

At 06.00 on October 1st the Desert Mounted Corps and the Arab Army entered Damascus amidst scenes of great enthusiasm. After the German and Turkish troops in the town had been collected and guards had been posted, our troops were withdrawn. In the meantime the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade had proceeded northwards in pursuit of bodies of the enemy, which had succeeded in leaving the town on the previous day, or had avoided it, and the cordon round it, by making a detour to the east. On October 2nd a column was overtaken at Kubbeth I Asafir, 17 miles north-east of Damascus. This column was dispersed, 1,500 prisoners and three guns being taken.

24. The advance to Damascus, following on the operations in the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel, had thrown a considerable strain on the Desert Mounted Corps. Great results were, however, achieved.

On September 26th, when the advance began, some 45,000 Turks and Germans were still in Damascus or were retreating on it. It is true that all units were in a state of disorganisation, but, given time, the enemy could have formed a force capable of delaying my advance.

The destruction of the remnants of the IVth Army and the capture of an additional 20,000 prisoners prevented any possibility of this. The remnants of the Turkish Armies in Palestine and Syria, numbering some 17,000

men, of whom only 4,000 were effective rifles, fled northwards a mass of individuals, without organisation, without transport, and without any of the accessories required to enable it to act even on the defensive.

25. I determined to exploit this success and to advance to the line Rayak—Beirut. The occupation of Beirut would give me a port, with a road and a railway, leading inland to Rayak and Damascus. An alternative and shorter line of supply would thus be obtained.

The Desert Mounted Corps, leaving the Australian Mounted Division at Damascus, moved on Rayak and Zahle on October 5th. No opposition was encountered, and both places were occupied on the following day.

At Rayak, the junction of the broad gauge railway from the north and the metre gauge lines to Beirut and to Damascus and the Hejaz, were found on the aerodrome the remains of thirty aeroplanes which had been burnt by the enemy before he retired. Large quantities of stores and rolling stock were captured, most of the latter in a damaged condition.

In the meantime, the 7th (Meerut) Division had marched from Haifa to Beirut. Leaving Haifa on October 3rd, it marched along the coast. Crossing the Ladder of Tyre, it was received by the populace of Tyre and Sidon with enthusiasm. On October 8th it reached Beirut, where it was warmly welcomed, the inhabitants handing over 660 Turks, including 60 officers, who had surrendered to them. Ships of the French Navy had already entered the harbour.

26. On October 9th I ordered the Desert Mounted Corps to continue its advance and occupy Homs, leaving one division at Damascus. At the same time I ordered the XXIst Corps to continue its march along the coast to Tripoli. Armoured cars occupied Baalbek on October 9th, taking over 500 Turks who had surrendered to the inhabitants. The 5th Cavalry Division, which led the advance, reached Baalbek on October 11th, and, crossing the watershed between the Nahr Litani on the south and the Orontes on the north, followed the valley of the latter river, past Lebwe, and reached Homs on October 15th, having marched over eighty miles since leaving Rayak.

The station buildings at Homs had been burnt by the enemy before he evacuated the town on October 12th.

On the coast, Tripoli was occupied by the XXIst Corps Cavalry Regiment and armoured cars on October 13th. No opposition was encountered. The Corps Cavalry Regiment was followed by a brigade of the 7th (Meerut) Division. The occupation of Tripoli provided a shorter route by which the cavalry at Homs could be supplied.

27. Having secured Homs and Tripoli, I determined to seize Aleppo with the least possible delay. The 5th Cavalry Division and the Armoured Car Batteries were alone available. The Australian Mounted Division at Damascus was over 100 miles distant from Homs, and could not be brought up in time. The 4th Cavalry Division at Baalbek was much reduced in strength by sickness, and needed a rest to reorganise. Time was of importance, and I judged that the 5th Cavalry Division would be strong enough for the purpose. The information available indicated the presence

of some 20,000 Turks and Germans at Aleppo. Of these, only some 8,000 were combatants, and they were demoralised. Moreover, reports from all sources showed that considerable numbers of the enemy were leaving the town daily by rail for the north.

The armoured cars had reached Hama without opposition on October 20th. On the following day the 5th Cavalry Division commenced its advance. On October 22nd the armoured cars reached Khan Sebit, halfway between Homs and Aleppo, as the enemy's rearguard left the village in lorries. A German armoured car, a lorry and some prisoners were captured. The enemy were not encountered again till October 24th, when a body of cavalry were dispersed at Khan Tuman, ten miles south of Aleppo. Five miles further on the armoured cars were checked by strong Turkish rearguards and had to remain in observation till the cavalry came up.

On the afternoon of October 25th the armoured cars were joined by the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade. That evening a detachment of the Arab Army reached the eastern outskirts of Aleppo, and during the night forced their way in, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Early on the morning of October 26th the armoured cars and the 15th Cavalry Brigade, moving round the west side of the town, followed the enemy along the Aleppo—Katma road and gained touch with him south-east of Haritan. The Turkish rearguard consisted of some 2,500 infantry, 150 cavalry, and eight guns. The Mysore Lancers and two squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers attacked the enemy's left; covered by the fire of the armoured cars, the Machine Gun Squadron and two dismounted squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers. The Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers charged most gallantly. A number of Turks were speared, and many threw down their arms, only to pick them up again when the cavalry had passed through, and their weakness had become apparent. The squadrons were not strong enough to complete the victory, and were withdrawn till a larger force could be assembled.

That night the Turkish rearguard withdrew to a position near Deir el Jemel, twenty miles north-west of Aleppo. The 5th Cavalry Division remained in observation, astride the roads leading from Aleppo to Killis and Katma, and occupied Muslimie Junction.

It was too weak to continue the advance to Alexandretta till the arrival of the Australian Mounted Division, which had already left Damascus to join it.

Before the latter could arrive, the armistice between the Allies and Turkey had been concluded, and came into force at noon on October 31st.

The 5th Cavalry Division captured fifty prisoners and eighteen guns in Aleppo. The Turks had carried out demolitions on the railway at Aleppo and Muslimie Junction before retiring, but had left eight engines and over 100 trucks, which, though damaged, are not beyond repair.

Aleppo is over 300 miles from our former front line. The 5th Cavalry Division covered 500 miles between September 19th and October 26th, and captured over 11,000 prisoners and fifty-two guns. During this period the 5th



Cavalry Division lost only 21 per cent. of its horses.

28. Between September 19th and October 26th 75,000 prisoners have been captured. Of these, over 200 officers and 3,500 other ranks are Germans or Austrians.

In addition, 360 guns have fallen into our hands and the transport and equipment of three Turkish armies. It is not yet possible to give accurate figures, owing to the rapidity and the extent of the advance. In the first three phases of the operations material and equipment were hastily abandoned by the enemy in a mountainous area, extending over 2,500 square miles, while in the remaining phases a further advance of over 300 miles has been made. The captures, however, include over 800 machine guns, 210 motor lorries, 44 motor cars, some 3,500 animals, 89 railway engines and 468 carriages and trucks. Of these many are unserviceable, but none have been included that are beyond repair.

29. The plan of operations and the arrangements for the concentration were carefully prepared and well executed by Commanders and Staffs. During the subsequent days of fighting full advantage was taken of every opportunity offered.

The gallantry and determination of all ranks and of all arms has been most marked. Many units had already made their reputation in this, and other, theatres of the war. Some had yet to gain their first experience of modern warfare. British, French and Indian troops, and those of the Dominions and Colonies, have all alike done magnificently.

The infantry, in a few hours, broke through the defences, which the enemy had spent months in strengthening, thus enabling the cavalry to accomplish its mission. The subsequent advance through the hills, over most difficult country, and in face of determined and organised resistance by the enemy's rear-guards, tried the infantry severely. Nothing, however, stopped its progress, and the relentless pressure maintained on the enemy's rear-guards allowed him no time to carry out an organised retreat, and drove him, in disorganised bodies, into the arms of the cavalry.

The Desert Mounted Corps took some 46,000 prisoners during the operations. The complete destruction of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish Armies depended mainly on the rapidity with which their communications were reached, and on quick decision in dealing with the enemy's columns as they attempted to escape. The vigorous handling of the cavalry by its leaders, and the rapidity of its movements, overcame all attempts to delay its progress. The enemy's columns, after they had outdistanced the pursuing infantry, were given no time to re-organise and fight their way through.

In these brilliant achievements the regiment of French cavalry took its full share; whilst east of the Jordan the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, by its untiring pursuit, threw the IVth Turkish Army into a state of disorganisation, intercepted the garrison of Maan, and compelled it to surrender. Chaytor's Force took 10,000 prisoners in the valley of the Jordan and the hills of Moab.

The cavalry and infantry received every help from the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, whilst the infantry, in its attack

along the coast, was given valuable assistance by the Destroyers "Druid" and "Forester," which Rear-Admiral T. Jackson, C.B., M.V.O., had detailed to assist me.

Of the fighting troops, all have taken their share, and have carried out what was required of them. I would bring to notice the good fighting qualities shown by the newer units. These include the Armenian troops of the Légion d'Orient, the Tirailleurs Algériens, the 1st Battalion Cape Corps, the 38th and 39th (Jewish) Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the British West Indies Regiment, and all the recently formed battalions of Indian Infantry.

Brilliant work has been done by the Palestine Brigade, Royal Air Force, and the Australian Flying Corps, not only during the actual operations, but in the preceding months. The process of wearing down the enemy's strength in the air had been continuous throughout the summer. Our ascendancy in the air became so marked towards the end of August that only a few of the enemy's aeroplanes were able to fly, with the result that my troops were immune from air attacks during the operations, and the whole strength of the Air Forces could be concentrated on the enemy in his retreat.

Besides taking an active part in the fighting, the Air Forces provided me with full and accurate information as to the enemy's movements.

The Arab Army has rendered valuable assistance, both in cutting the enemy's communications before and during the operations, and in co-operating with my cavalry during the advance on Damascus. By throwing itself across the enemy's line of retreat north of Deraa it prevented the escape of portions of the IVth Turkish Army, and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.

The fighting troops have been loyally assisted by the administrative services and departments, who have carried a heavy burden on their shoulders, both in front of and behind railhead. The accumulation of ammunition and stores before operations commenced threw a great strain on the railway. The delivery of these stores to the troops during operations proved a difficult task. Supply columns have had long distances to cover, over bad roads, but all difficulties have been overcome.

My thanks are due to the Royal Navy for its assistance in arranging and securing the landing of supplies at the various harbours along my line of advance, and to the French Navy for valuable information gained in the reconnaissance of the northern ports.

The Italian detachment carried out to my entire satisfaction the task allotted to it, and throughout the operations gave valuable and loyal assistance.

From the first day of operations the Egyptian Labour Corps has followed the troops as they advanced, working hard and successfully to improve the roads. On 19th September companies were working on the roads in front of our original line while our guns were still firing.

The Camel Transport Corps has rendered valuable services, which have greatly aided in the victorious campaign.

The Signal Service, strained to its utmost, has maintained uninterrupted communication

with units of the Army as far east as Amman, and as far north as Aleppo.

The rapid advance has rendered difficult the task of evacuating the sick and wounded. The difficulty was increased by the large number of prisoners who, after marching for days, with little food or water, surrendered in a state of extreme weakness, unable to march another day. The care and evacuation of these men

has heavily taxed the Medical Services, who have worked untiringly.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient  
Servant,

E. E. H. ALLENBY,

General, Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian  
Expeditionary Force.

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